



УКРАЇНСЬКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ЦЕРКВА В КАНАДІ
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA
L'ÉGLISE ORTHODOXE UKRAINIENNE DU CANADA

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Statement
of the Episcopate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
in remembrance of the Revolution of Dignity
in the second year since February 18-20, 2014 in Kyiv, Ukraine

Reverend clergy and faithful of the UOCC,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

This is the second year that we solemnly bow our heads in remembrance of the tragic Revolution of Dignity that continues since February 18-20, 2014 in Kyiv, Ukraine. The Episcopate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada calls upon its clergy and faithful to remember with prayer the 117 individuals who have become known as the *Nebesna Sotnya*, the heroic Heavenly Hundred.

It was one year ago that the Episcopate of the UOCC, as part of the delegation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Bishops Beyond the Borders of Ukraine, travelled to Kyiv, Ukraine to serve a *Panakhya* and honour these individuals who gave their lives for the Ukrainian people. During the Revolution of Dignity from November to February 2013-2014, the dictatorial regime of that time deliberately planned and perpetrated violence against its own unarmed people. These Heavenly Hundred selflessly sacrificed their lives in the hope of securing basic human rights and freedoms in their homeland for the present and future generations.

These were only the first of many heroic sacrifices made by ordinary citizens of Ukraine over the past two years. The conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine has seen the loss of almost 10,000 souls. The six million residents of this region have had their lives shattered by violence. There are almost two million displaced from their homes. The occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation has led to repression of the Ukrainian Church and Ukraine's citizens there and in the eastern conflict zone. Numerous acts of terrorism threaten security and lives in other parts of Ukraine. We are greatly distressed by this immense suffering in our spiritual homeland.

What can we do to help our brethren? As Orthodox Christians, we first ought to support them by praying that the Lord assist those struggling in our ancestral homeland. We also ought to pray in our personal prayers and in collective worship for the eternal memory of those who died two

years ago on the Maidan in Kyiv as well as for those who continue to perish daily on the front lines in the conflict zone. We honour these ordinary citizens who became heroes defending their homeland and their fellow citizens. We pray for the safety and well-being of the defenders of Ukraine.

The Lord has already given us the light of hope. We are heartened by the tremendous acts of generosity and compassion with the rise of volunteerism in Ukraine and in our Ukrainian communities in the Diaspora. All of these acts of love for one another are signs of our love for God. The Episcopate encourages the faithful of the UOCC to continue to participate in humanitarian efforts for Ukraine. These efforts not only aid those in our ancestral homeland, but they help us to become better Orthodox Christians here in Canada through our acts of mercy and benevolence to others. All of this is pleasing to the Lord.

We may also see hope in the growth of the Church in Ukrainian society. Beginning with the Revolution of Dignity, the Church has reclaimed its voice of authority among the Ukrainian people. It now plays a fundamental role in shaping the moral framework for building a democratic civil society. The Church's participation becomes even more vital in the near future as Ukraine confronts the internal enemies of corruption, bribery and greed – vestiges of the godless communist past.

We urge the Canadian Government to continue its support for Ukraine. The people of Ukraine have only begun their long struggle to build a civil society based on democratic values and respect for human rights. Many steps have been taken in this direction, but much more is needed. Over the past two years, Canada has taken a leading role in international diplomatic circles to assist to resolve the situation. It has been one of the first countries to implement sanctions against the perpetrators of the violence in Ukraine and to provide humanitarian aid to Ukraine. We are immensely thankful to the Lord for blessing us to live in a bountiful country that is not indifferent to the real needs of those suffering in far off lands.

February 18-20 have been declared the official days of remembrance in Ukraine to commemorate the *Nebesna Sotnya* and those who continue to give their lives in defence of their homeland and the Ukrainian people. In order that we may join with our brethren in Ukraine and throughout the world to pray for their eternal memory, we bless that in parishes of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, February 21, 2016, a *Panakhyda* memorial service be served for the repose of the *Nebesna Sotnya* and those who have died in defence of Ukraine.

May the Lord hear our prayers to save and protect our spiritual Motherland Ukraine and its long-suffering people.

With Hierarchical Blessing,

† *YURIJ, Metropolitan*

† *ILARION, Bishop*

† *ANDRIY, Bishop*